



State Representative Barbara Bailey

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Committees:

- Health Care
– Ranking Republican
- Appropriations
- Joint Select Committee
on Veterans and Military
Affairs

10TH DISTRICT

Representative Barbara Bailey

2005 Legislative Update and Survey

10th Legislative District

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2005 legislative session has passed the halfway mark and is now heading into the final weeks. I wanted to take this opportunity to provide an update of the many important issues we are considering in the Legislature.

Among those top issues are:

- Adopting a no-new-taxes budget that preserves vital services and protects vulnerable citizens.
- Creating jobs in the private sector by making it easier to do business in Washington.
- Protecting patient choices and reducing costs to make health care affordable and accessible for everyone.
- Reforming our state's election system to ensure it is fair and accurate.
- Ensuring the highest quality of our schools so that every child has access to the best education possible.
- Improving our transportation system while making sure we get the most for our money.

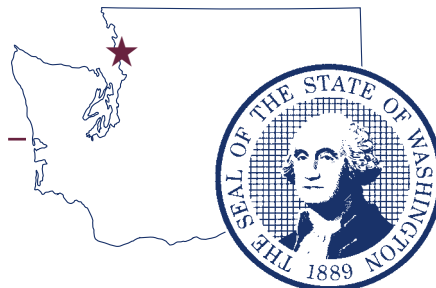
More information on these and other issues are included inside this newsletter.

You'll also find a survey in this newsletter that I hope you will complete and return. Your input will help me do a better job of representing you and your family.

I appreciate the honor of serving you. I take this responsibility seriously and value your thoughts, concerns and questions.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bailey
State Representative



Remember, I'm here to serve you!

Solving problems is what being a legislator is all about. I'm here to serve you as well as represent you. If you need help dealing with a state agency or need answers on state regulations or laws, please call my Olympia office at 360-786-7914 or the toll-free Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

Budget - Increase in revenues make tax increases unnecessary

Two years ago when the state was facing a budget shortfall of more than \$2 billion and pressure was on to raise taxes, we prioritized spending, cut unnecessary programs, and adopted a no-new-taxes budget. By resisting tax increases, we helped the economy grow and create new jobs. As a result, the revenue forecast released March 17 indicated an additional \$735 million in unanticipated revenues coming in to the state. Overall, the growth in Washington's economy will provide an additional \$1.65 billion over the 2003-05 biennium.

So why are we hearing that Washington has another budget deficit?

Even though the state has more money to spend, some in Olympia want to increase spending even more. That's the reason for the so-called "deficit." To cover this "deficit," the governor and the majority party are proposing as much as a half billion dollars in new tax increases. They have also proposed to eliminate the voter-approved I-601 spending limit law so that more tax money can be spent.

Washington will already have more money to spend in the coming biennium than it did in the previous budget year — without tax increases. Instead of a tax-and-spend budget, we need to return to a no-new-taxes budget that sets priorities, preserves essential programs and protects taxpayers.

Restoring confidence in the election process

Following the 2004 gubernatorial election fiasco, reforming our state's voting system has become a top priority. To ensure an honest, accurate and fair election system, I support the following reforms:



Rep. Barbara Bailey discusses the need for affordable, consumer-driven health care during debate on the House floor.

- Reconstruct voter registration rolls by 2007 and conduct monthly checks for felons, deceased voters and duplicate registrations.
- Verify voter ID at the polls.
- Increase penalties for illegal voters.
- Ensure every vote has a voter by reconciling the number of ballots with the number of voters credited with voting.
- Trigger an automatic revote if discrepancies between ballots and voters exceeds the winning margin.
- Move the primary to the third Tuesday in August to give counties more time to prepare and mail ballots, ensuring military ballots arrive sooner.
- Require all ballots to be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day, except military ballots which may be accepted up until final certification.

Health Care - Getting to the root of the crisis

The major problem creating our state's health care crisis is cost. The state's 49 health insurance mandates have made it too expensive for many employers to offer health insurance to workers and their families. Some lawmakers are promoting policies that would incrementally lead us to government-run "socialized medicine" which costs more, delivers less, and changes the doctor-patient relationship to one between the patient and the state. That is the wrong approach.

The real answer to Washington's health-care crisis is addressing the problems driving up the cost of medical care.

As the **ranking Republican on the House Health Care Committee**, I have introduced cost-containment reforms to get at the root of the health care crisis. These reforms include:

- **Freezing the mandates** that drive up health insurance costs and studying the costs versus benefits for existing mandates.
- **Allowing more options in health insurance plans** that small employers can choose from so that they may purchase a more affordable plan that will meet their employees' needs.
- **Providing medical malpractice reforms** that will bring down the cost of insurance, weed out frivolous lawsuits, keep good doctors in our communities, and make sure Washingtonians get the best medical care, products and services.
- **Creating Health Savings Accounts** that allow public employees to own their own health care plan and save money tax-free for the costs of their medical care.

Please take a moment to complete this survey. When you are done, clip it from the rest of the newsletter, fold and mail it back with the return mail panel showing. Thank you in advance for your participation.

PRIORITIES

Rank these issues according to importance, with "1" being most important, "2" being the next most important, and so on.

- economy and jobs
- taxes and spending
- land use/property rights
- crime and security
- education
- election reform
- health care
- transportation
- social services

BUDGET AND SPENDING

Some lawmakers want to increase government spending by raising taxes. How should we balance the state's budget?

- Increase taxes to meet government spending needs
- Set priorities and hold the line against tax increases
- A combination of spending cuts and tax increases

Should the Legislature repeal the state's voter-approved spending limit law?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

ELECTIONS

Which proposals would you support to reform our election process?

- ☐ Support

☐ Do not support

Require proof of citizenship/identification to vote
- ☐ Support

☐ Do not support

Require all voters to re-register
- ☐ Support

☐ Do not support

Move the Primary Election date to August (*currently held in September*) to allow adequate time for General Election ballots to be mailed earlier

HEALTH CARE

Which approach do you support to address our state's health care crisis?

- Expand taxpayer-subsidized government-operated health care programs.
- Foster competitive private health insurance by adopting cost-containment measures (mandate freezes, more coverage options for small businesses, malpractice reforms, and Health Savings Accounts).

HEALTH CARE continued

Many doctors in Washington are having trouble affording malpractice insurance. Has this issue touched you personally, for instance, through a doctor limiting services, retiring early or leaving the state?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which of the following do you believe will best reduce or stabilize medical malpractice insurance premiums? (Check all that apply)

- Cap "pain and suffering" damages
- Require judges to throw out "frivolous" lawsuits
- Revoke licenses of doctors with repeated malpractice monetary settlements or guilty verdicts
- Require only those who played a part in the damages to pay for the damages
- More closely regulate malpractice insurance companies

Do you support importing drugs from Canada?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- Why or why not?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Would you like more information?

If you would like periodic updates on legislative issues, please fill out this section. Be sure to include your e-mail address if you would like to receive updates via e-mail.

Return Address:

Name

Address

City Zip

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City _____ Zip _____

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Please clip survey from newsletter, and fold it with this side showing to return.

Preparing our students for the future

Our schools cultivate future leaders. It's important that all students have the tools they need to succeed inside and beyond the classroom. Here are some of our goals:

- Create accountability for dropout rates in schools by expanding reporting of dropouts to the 7th and 8th grades.
- Increase the use of digital technology and web-based learning alternatives.
- Promote reading development by establishing a "Ready to Read" community assistance program that would bring books to children, parents to school, and success to students.



The bad bed tax

It was a mistake two years ago to support a \$6.50-a-day nursing home "bed tax." We passed that bill at the urging of the nursing home industry to help provide matching federal Medicaid money and prevent the closure of nursing homes across the state. We were told this fee would be charged only to those on Medicaid and never to those paying with their own money.

Instead, the tax was charged to everyone with a bed in a nursing home. Even worse, rather than the money going to support nursing homes, it was redirected into the general fund to pay the state's day-to-day bills while 13 nursing homes closed.

This was bad legislation. To correct this, we need policy legislation separate from the budget to do two things:

- Repeal the bed tax.
- Replace the amount of money generated by the tax and make sure it goes to support nursing homes.



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and the economy**
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